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**MEMOIRS AND LETTERS OF POLISH AUTHORS FROM
THE WESTERN KRAI (LITHUANIA, BELARUS, UKRAINE)
FROM THE PERIOD OF 1795–1918 –
A SUMMARY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES
AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**

The article discusses the studies conducted in 2012–2017 at the Jan Kochanowski University under the research project entitled “Memoirs and Letters of Polish Authors from the Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) from the Period of 1795–1918”. The project was implemented under the National Programme for the Development of Humanities by an international research team led by Professor Wiesław Caban. The study included inventorying and cataloguing the 19th-century diaries, memoirs and collections of letters of Polish authors from the so-called Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) as well as the authors writing about these territories. Surveys of archival materials were conducted in libraries and archives in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia (including Siberia), London and Paris. The outcome of the project is an online database of memoirs and letters available at the Jan Kochanowski University website and a series of publications of the most valuable memoirs from Russian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian archives.

KEY WORDS: *History of the 19th Century, Memoirs and Letters of Poles of the 19th Century, Fate of Poles in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus.*

Introduction

The article discusses the results of studies conducted in 2012–2017 at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce under the research project entitled *Memoirs and Letters of Polish Authors from the Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) from the*

Period of 1795–1918. The project was implemented under the National Programme for the Development of Humanities by an international research team led by Professor Wiesław Caban (contract number: 083 / NPRH2 / H11 / 81/2012). The research team comprised historians from several Polish and foreign research centres, including Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Jagiellonian University, Lodz University, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute in Vilnius, Minsk State University and Eastern European National University in Lutsk.

The project was implemented in the context of wider cooperation with other Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Russian scientific institutions, including Russian historians representing research centres situated in Siberia. In the latter case, it was quite important for the study of letters of Polish exiles to Siberia in the 19th century, which never reached their recipients due to the Russian censorship and are currently stored in local archives. It should be emphasised that the unique character of these sources contributed significantly to their high educational value.

Desk research

The discussed research project of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities was based on significant assumptions of documentation and research nature. It included inventorying and cataloguing the 19th-century diaries, memoirs and collections of letters of the Polish authors from the so-called Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) as well as the authors writing about these territories or associated with them. The name “Western Krai” refers to the eastern lands of the former Republic of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and the right-bank Ukraine.

The main reason for undertaking the multifaceted scientific research to identify and list handwritten memoirs and letters was a considerable dispersion of this type of source documentation, stored not only in national collections but mainly in archives and libraries abroad. Surveys of archival materials included library and archive collections in Poland (Warsaw, Krakow, Wroclaw, Kórnik), Ukraine (Kiev, Lviv), Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas), Belarus (Minsk, Grodno), Russia (Moscow, Petersburg, Omsk, Tomsk, Tobolsk) as well as in Polish institutions in France (Polish Library in Paris) and England (Polish Institute and General Sikorski Museum in London).

The inventorying of the 19th-century memoirs and collections of letters of the Polish authors from the Western Krai kept in Polish and foreign archives and libraries became the basis for developing an online database, which currently includes more than 3,000 source items available to researchers at the project website (<http://www.ujk.edu.pl/nprh/system/> – open access). The database was also used to prepare and publish a two-volume catalogue containing approximately 5,300 handwritten source items and printed letters and memoirs

from the period of 1795–1918 (See: *Pamiętniki i listy polskich autorów z Ziem Zabrzanych (Litwa, Białoruś, Ukraina) w latach 1795–1918. Materiały do katalogu [Memoirs and letters of Polish authors from the Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) in the years 1795–1918. Catalogue materials*. Vol. 1–2] 2017). The catalogue records 793 handwritten and 1,534 printed memoirs as well as 2,486 handwritten and 476 printed letters.

The publication presents a wide range of problems and the scale of the project which aimed at inventorying the letters and memoirs of Polish authors from the Western Krai from the 19th century. The catalogue is not complete and by no means is it an exhaustive source of information on the subject. We are aware of the fact that it records only those memoirs and letters which were studied within the scope of research and that the project needs to be continued. However, it is an important starting point for further research on the history of Poles in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in the 19th century. The scientific value of the source documentation is undeniable which is evidenced by an international scientific conference on the role and place of the 19th-century memoirs and letters in historical and literary research organised by our Institute in June 2016. The conference participants included nearly 50 researchers from Polish and foreign research centres who presented various historiographical approaches towards the source research of the 19th-century collections of letters and memoirs of the Polish authors from the Western Krai.

The role played by catalogues and inventories of the 19th-century collections of letters and memoirs in historical research is significant. They are often introduced to scientific literature, both in Poland and abroad, which undoubtedly testifies to the growing scientific interest in this type of source documentation. The catalogue of the 19th-century letters and memoirs of Polish authors from the Western Krai published under the project of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities fits perfectly in this general scientific and publishing trend. Additionally, it presents the scope and scale of the project aiming at listing and describing the collections of letters and memoirs of Polish authors. Furthermore, the catalogue will serve not only Polish researchers but also Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian ones as a large group of historians and literary scholars from those countries conduct research in this field (Prašmantaitė 2016, Makarevich 2016).

Moving on to a more detailed characteristics of sources inventoried and catalogued by our team under the project of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities entitled *Memories and Letters of Polish Authors from the Western Krai (Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine) from the Period of 1795–1918* it should be emphasised that in Lithuania queries were conducted at the Lithuanian Historical Archives in Vilnius, the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (formerly the Wróblewscy Library) and the Library of Vilnius University. The most valuable source materials were found in these institutions in the collection of the Society of the Friends of Science in Vilnius (Historical Archives) and in the Department of Manuscripts of the Library of Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Vilnius

archives and libraries provided valuable information concerning literary legacy of Poles (Ilgiewicz 2015, Kocójowa 1993). It is difficult to state, however, whether our query was exhaustive and whether we were able to reach all sources of this type. Certainly, memoirs and letters of Poles from Lithuania, who in the 19th century were in exile in Siberia, kept in Vilnius collections deserve special attention. These are extremely valuable research sources.

In Belarus the studies were conducted at the Belarusian State Historical Archives in Minsk and the Belarusian State Historical Archives in Grodno, where several interesting memoirs and letters of Poles from the 19th century were found.

Much larger collections of sources related to the subject of the discussed project were inventoried in Ukraine, in the archives and libraries of Lviv and Kiev. The search conducted in those archives confirmed that no attempt has been made to determine the literary legacy (memoirs, diaries and letters) of Poles from the Western Krai on such a scale before. This type of source materials is an important source for recreating and understanding the Polish character of these areas (Archiwa rodzinno-majątkowe w zbiorach państwowych we Lwowie [Family and estate archives in state collections in Lviv] 1995; Pająk, Szczepański 2017: 57–68; Epsztein 2017: 87–100). During the archival and library queries our research team discovered very interesting memoirs (23 volumes) of the Treter family (from the collections of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine and Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library in Lviv). The author of the collection of memoirs written over several decades was Stanisław Treter (1744–1833). Memoirs were also written by his successors. The material contained therein refers to the Eastern Galicia, the Western Krai, the Polish Kingdom and the territory of Warmia and Mazury, where the Treters came from. Impressive correspondence of the Treter family complements the memoirs. The collection of letters written by Stanisław Kajetan Treter comprises 9,647 pages. There is also a very interesting correspondence of Stanisław Miaskowski (1840–1868), writer and publicist, currently stored in Lviv. Miaskowski, born in Zhitomir, was a participant in January Uprising and later an exile. He left a collection of letters comprising more than 1,000 pages (currently stored in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv).

Particularly interesting source materials were catalogued by the team members in the archives and libraries of Kiev. Family records stored in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine (Hiscowa 1998) proved really valuable. While implementing the project, we took advantage of the documentation of the families of Braniccy, Hańscy, Giżyccy, Godebscy, Grocholscy, Borkowscy, Zamoyscy, Lubomirscy, Michałowscy, Młoccy, Platerowie, Poniatowscy, Potoccy, Proskór-Suszczańscy, Radziwiłłowie, Sapiehowie, Sobańscy, Tarnowscy and Cetnerowie. Attention was also paid to the correspondence between Tekla Bołsunowska and Polish exiles from the first half of the 19th century. Another interesting collection of the documents of the Museum of Volhynia, which included, among others, valuable memoirs of Adela Kieniewicz, daughter-in-law of Hieronim Kieniewicz and a participant in Polish national uprisings, was also used in the project. The memoirs (32 volumes) cover the period from January 1888 to April 1915.

Conducting research in the archives and libraries of Moscow and Petersburg was a new experience to the project team. In Moscow, the search was carried out in the State Historical Archives of the Russian Federation (*rus.* GARF), the National Library of Russia – Department of Manuscripts (*rus.* RGB), Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts (*rus.* RGALI), the Russian State Archive of Historical Records (*rus.* RGAD) as well as in the Local State Archives of Moscow – Museum of Personal Collections. Unfortunately, the results of this research were not significant. A collection of letters and memoirs was found in the State Historical Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF). It included works written by Poles from the Western Krai who were exiled to Siberia for their participation in the movements for independence in the 1840s–1860s. The memoirs and letters of Tomasz Bułhak (1801–1895) were particularly valuable similarly to the extensive correspondence of the Jamontowie family, who participated in the January Uprising and were exiled to Siberia.

In St. Petersburg, the query was conducted at the Central State Historical Archive (*rus.* RGIA) and the Russian National Library (*rus.* RNB), where the members of the project team expected to find numerous memoirs of Poles, who in the 19th century would frequently come to St. Petersburg to look for work (*intelligentsia*) or to study. The number of Poles in St. Petersburg grew steadily throughout the 19th century. While at the turn of the 1830s and 1840s there were about 40 thousand Poles there, in 1914 the number reached at least 60 thousand. In the years of World War I, there were 132 thousand Poles in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, although thousands of bibliographical records were studied, no manuscripts of memoirs or collections of letters of Poles from the Western Krai were found in the archival collections of St. Petersburg. Single letters of Polish authors, including the already published letters of Hugon Kołłątaj, Jan Klemens Branicki, Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Tadeusz Czacki and others, were found in the Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library (RNB). There were also a few letters of people of Polish origin to various Russian recipients. The most valuable documents include reports of Józef Adamowski who after serving a sentence of exile decided to stay in Russia permanently. His correspondence, however, is of official nature. The research conducted in Russian archives leads us to the conclusion that the Poles who came to stay in St. Petersburg in the 19th century either did not leave any memoirs and letters or simply we were unable to find such source materials during the search conducted by our project team. A few memoirs of Poles from the 19th century, mostly those who renounced their Polish citizenship, were published in Russian historical journals. More memoirs and diaries were published of the Poles who stayed in St. Petersburg at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, however, most of those people were Russified Poles, for instance Józef Przeclawski (more on this topic see: Caban 1999: 81–95). One of the few exceptions was Oktawian Jeleński (Jeleński 2015: 21–72).

A certain group of Poles who returned to their homeland after the Russian Revolution of 1917 deposited their memoirs in archives and libraries of Vilnius, Lviv, Warsaw and Krakow and consequently this was where we found them. Some of them were published

in 1918–1939 and after 1945. The most interesting documents include the memoirs of Apollon Skalkowski (1808–1898), born to a Polish family in Zhytomyr. Forty volumes of memoirs written in Polish and Russian are kept in the Historical Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg Branch.

Other valuable memoirs are kept in the Polish Library in Paris. They are the legacy of Poles from the Western Krai, who were forced to emigrate after the 19th-century national uprisings. The most important memoirs on the November Uprising were published in the 19th century by Feliks Wrotnowski and Ksawery Bronikowski (Wrotnowski 1833; Wrotnowski 1835; Wrotnowski 1837–1838; Bronikowski 1844–1845). Others remain to be published (Żaliński 1993:75–82). Numerous biographical materials of immigrants from the Western Krai, especially after the defeat of the November Uprising, can be found in the collections of the Polish Library in Paris, in the section entitled “The Institution of Honour and Bread”. The Institution was established in 1862 and for several decades implemented various self-help programmes (See: *Nie znane [!] losy uczestników powstań narodowych: 1830–1831, 1848, 1863–1864* [Unknown(!) fate of the participants of national uprisings of 1830–1831, 1848, 1863–1864] 2000). Following long discussions, we made a decision not to include this literary material of Poles from the territories of the present Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine as to a large extent the material was too fragmentary. We also decided not to include the correspondence of Polish immigrants which concerned their daily life and political activity in Western Europe. This issue is beyond the scope of our project and requires a separate study.

The archival and library search was also conducted at the Polish Institute and the General Sikorski Museum in London, where we found memoirs of Poles from the Western Krai who, in certain time, held top positions in state administration or the army. It was difficult to determine how memoirs and diaries written in Vilnius or Minsk at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries reached London as archival inventories do not define the circumstances under which the manuscripts reached the Polish Institute in London.

A separate direction for our research concerned the search for memoirs and collections of letters in Polish libraries and archives. The search included the following institutions: the National Library in Warsaw, the Ossolineum National Library in Wrocław, the Jagiellonian University Library, the Princes Czartoryski Library – National Museum in Krakow, the Library of Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Krakow, the Warsaw University Library, the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kórnik, the Library of the Toruń Scientific Society, the Library of the Płock Scientific Society, the Library of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the Hieronim Łopaciński Regional Public Library in Lublin and the Raczyńscy Library in Poznań.

Publication series entitled *Kresy w polskich pamiętnikach i listach 1795–1918* [*Eastern Borderlands in Polish Memoirs and Letters 1795–1918*]

The analysis of the inventoried source documentation (handwritten and printed memoirs and letters) conducted by the project team members consequently led to the selection and

edition of the most valuable memoirs and collections of the letters of Poles from the Western Krai from the 19th century. For this purpose, an editorial committee of the publication series entitled “Kresy w polskich pamiętnikach i listach 1795–1918” [Eastern Borderlands in Polish memoirs and letters 1795–1918] was established. Until now, the publishing house of the Jan Kochanowski University and the DiG Publishing House in Warsaw have published eight volumes of the memoirs, namely:

1. *Wilno i Wileńszczyzna w pamiętnikach z lat pierwszej wojny światowej (Materiały ze zbiorów wileńskich i londyńskich)* [Vilnius and the Vilnius region in memoirs from World War I (materials from Vilnius and London collections)] 2014. Eds. M. Przeniosło, M. Przeniosło. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego.
2. BRENSZTEJN, M., 2015. *Dziennik 1915–1918. Część 1: rok 1915 i 1916*. [BRENSZTEJN, M., 2015. *Memoirs 1915–1918. Part I: years 1915 and 1916*]. Eds. M. i M. Przeniosło. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego.
3. *Nieznane listy z Ziem Zabrzanych* [Unknown letters from the Western Krai] 2016. Ed. S. Wiech. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego.
4. *Polacy z Wilna i ze Żmudzi na zesłaniu. Pamiętnik Józefa Bogusławskiego i księdza Mateusza Wejta* [Poles from Vilnius and Samogitia in exile. Memoirs of Józef Bogusławski and priest Mateusz Wejt] 2016. Ed. M. Nowak. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego.
5. *Jan Witort o syberyjskim zesłaniu i rusyfikacji Żmudzi* [Jan Witort on Siberian exile and russification of Samogitia] 2017. Eds. W. Caban, J. Szczepański, in cooperation with Z. Wójcik. Warszawa: DiG.
6. ROMER, S., 2017. *Wspomnienia spisane w 1863 roku* [Seweryn Romer – memoirs written in the year 1863]. Ed. T. Bairašauskaitė. Warszawa: DiG.
7. *Pamiętnik Emila Dybowskiego* [Memoirs of Emil Dybowski] 2017. Ed. A. Brus. Warszawa: DiG.
8. *Moje wspomnienia w Massalanach spisane. Pamiętniki Jana ordynata Bispinga 1842–1892* [My memories recorded in Massalany. Memoirs of Entailer Jan Bisping 1842–1892] 2017. Eds. J. Pająk, J. Szczepański. Afterword B. Bisping. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego.

In November 2017, all of the abovementioned memoirs and the three-volume catalogue received a prestigious KLIO prize at the XXVI Historical Book Fair in Warsaw.

The presented description of the research project entitled *Memoirs and Letters of Polish Authors from the Western Krai*, implemented under the National Programme for the Development of Humanities, not only allows a summary of the research outcomes and discussion of basic research directions that are currently being carried out by our team, but is also an excellent opportunity to present perspectives and further research postulates in the field of research on highly dispersed 19th-century memoirs and letters of Poles from the Western Krai.

Referring to the last issue, we are convinced that the research implemented by our team should be continued under a subsequent project of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities for which we shall be applying to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2018. The continuation of the project involves conducting further research of archival materials in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in various institutions including regional museums (e.g. Regional Museums in Panevėžys, Zhytomyr or Odessa) where, judging from the research outcomes, we believe interesting source materials might be found. We are also planning to examine the 19th-century press which published letters of Poles from the Western Krai not recorded in the existing bibliographies. This is an important research postulate.

The continuation of the project conducted under the National Programme for the Development of Humanities will also include the edition and publication of further memoirs and collections of letters from Polish and foreign archival collections, such as:

Powstanie listopadowe na ziemiach litewsko-ruskich w nieznanych dokumentach z bibliotek paryskich, wileńskich i kijowskich [The November Uprising in Lithuania and Russia in unknown documents from Paris, Vilnius and Kiev libraries]. Ed. N. Kasperek.

Z Witebska do Kraju Krasnojarskiego. Pamiętniki Maksymiliana Marksa (1816–1893) [From Vitebsk to the Krasnoyarsk Territory. Memoirs of Maksymilian Marks (1816–1893)]. Ed. S. Leończyk.

Pamiętniki Juliusza Rómmla [Memoirs of Juliusz Rómmel]. Vol. I–III, (1881–1918). Eds. J. Pająk, W. Caban, J. Szczepański, M. Sala.

Pamiętniki Zofii Łepkowskiej z lat 1891–1907 [Memoirs of Zofia Łepkowska from the years 1891–1907]. Eds. M. Domańska-Nogajczyk, T. Wójcik.

„*Wspomnienia łowieckie*” Antoniego Mikoszewskiego [‘Hunting Memories’ of Antoni Mikoszewski]. Ed. K. Ślusarek, T. Kargol.

We also plan to publish extensive excerpts from the abovementioned memoirs of the Treter family, Adela Kieniewicz and Apollon Skalkowski. These are very interesting examples of the sources describing various aspects of the functioning of the Polish gentry in the territories of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in the 19th century. Interesting issues are discussed in the memoirs of Apollon Skalkowski, a Pole from Zhitomir and a student of Vilnius and Moscow Universities. Similarly, the memoir of Zofia Łepkowska perfectly illustrates the everyday life of the Polish gentry in Podolia. In her diary, Łepkowska mentions the families of Wodziczcy, Michałowscy, Chełmińscy, Platerowie, Tarnowscy and others. Memoirs and letters written by women constitute an interesting element of a more detailed research interest of our project team. Another research direction is literary legacy of Poles from Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine who lived in exile in Siberia in the 19th century.

Conclusions

To sum up, it should be emphasised that the critical edition of the most valuable collections of letters and memoirs of Polish authors from the Western Krai in the 19th

century constitutes a significant research postulate, particularly as the Polonica (all kinds of documents related to Poland) are significantly dispersed abroad, especially in the East. This type of documentation and edition research are of paramount importance to Polish national culture and the protection of Polish cultural heritage abroad. Additionally, it has a large cognitive value. The dissemination of the research results and the introduction of numerous valuable lesser-known or already discovered sources into the scientific literature will contribute significantly to the deepening of our knowledge about the 19th-century history of Poland, particularly in Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus and generally in the Russian Empire in the 19th century, which should be considered extremely important.

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